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MUSINGS AND MEMORIES

J. H. STEPHENSON

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M. T. M. Dickinson

from her friend

J. W. Stephenson

December 2. 1881 –

MUSINGS

AND

MEMORIES.

Musings & Memories.

A THIRD VOLUME

OF

COLLECTED VERSES.

BY

JOSEPH HENRY STEPHENSON, M.A.,

RECTOR OF LYMPSHAM, PREBENDARY OF WELLS,

AND RURAL DEAN.

"I, AT MY STUDY WINDOW SIT,
AND WRAPT IN MANY A MUSING FIT
TO BLISS AM ALL ALIVE!"

—*H. K. White.*

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS AND CO.
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1880.

LOAN STACK

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Stern Reviewers having been undeservedly gracious towards me in their favourable criticisms of my former productions, I have ventured to select from my note-books a few more verses, written from time to time in by-gone years. A short holiday in my dear daughter's Northern home has given me a few weeks' leisure, in the midst of a busy life, to look over and arrange them. They are now sent forth with the hope that they may contain here and there some few thoughts, at all events, which may live when I am gone.

St. John's Parsonage, Forfar,
May 11th, 1880.

TO

MY FOUR MUCH-LOVED DAUGHTERS,

ANNA-MARIA, EDITH, EMMA, AND BLANCHE,

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED,

WHEREIN THEY WILL FIND SOME OLD FRIENDS

WITH WHICH THEY HAVE LONG BEEN FAMILIAR,

BY THEIR

FOND AND FAITHFUL FATHER.

To the Rev. James Buckingham,

J.P., B.C.L., RECTOR OF DODDISCOMBSLEIGH.

THE vernal months again are here,
So fleetly flies the changeful year,
Ere while the mist-wreaths floated by,
And frowned above the sullen sky.
The winds were out o'er dale and down,
All sombre slept the forests brown,
While angry brooklets sought the plains,
Swollen and dark with winter-rains.
But now all changed the varying scene,
The skies are bright, the fields are green,
The soft young leaflets clothe the tree,
Smiles the sweet cowslip on the lea;
While songster's notes from every spray,
Resound throughout the live-long day.
Nor only to "material things"
Springtide's return her influence brings,
Glad mortals too have owned the spell
In court, in camp, in sylvan dell,
Thus Mary tends her cherished flower,
Carry adorns her fragrant bower,

Nellie trips joyous through the glade,
So lightsome seems each mountain maid:
While Fred from Oxon finds his way,
With laurel crowned and classic bay,
Tells of the term-tide nobly done,
From Alma Mater honours won.
Surely, my Buckingham, at last,
We too may rise o'er sorrows past,
And emulate the vernal glow
Which sparkles in yon streamlet's flow.
True that our sorrows long have lain,
Like the thick shadows on the plain,
And tearful mists their drops have shed,
Low on our mountain's soaring head.
But now the lights are on the brae,
The startled shadows flee away,
E'en while the storm-cloud stains the sky,
Heaven's mystic arch appears on high;
And tints that angel hands have twined,
Leave on that cloud their hues behind.

Thus Scott to cherished friends would sing,
Ere yet the lark had pruned her wing,
Far off in Newark's beechen shade,
Or down St. Mary's silent glade;
Forgive thy southern bard meanwhile,
Essaying thus the Northern style;

And rest assured, nor "Rose" nor "Skene,"
"Marriot," nor "Erskine" could have been
Dearer to Scott than thou to me,
Down in the groves of Doddiscombsleigh,
"Ellis" nor "Heber" could secure
From Tweed's gay minstrel love more pure
Than that this rough unpolished lay
Would thus to thee in rhyme convey.

Enough! the leisure hour is gone,
Dame Duty comes to claim her own!

A Morning Walk on the Severn Shore

WEARY and sad I sought the wave-washed
shore,
And found refreshment for my toil-worn brain:
Sweet nature sympathized and brought relief!
I was a very child in joy once more,
Happy as when long since I castle raised,
Or fondly traced upon the level sand
Some much-loved name! As I approached,
The farther Holm smiled recognition, bright
beneath
The ray, and Dunkery, triple-crested, soared on
high;
Cambria all grey, through her thin azure veil,
Loomed coily to my gaze, and then retired;
While in the foreground the more rocky isle
Looked blue and wan beneath the passing cloud.
At length the mist withdrew, and one by one
Its cliffs all radiant caught the beam and glowed!
And so at last the whole stood forth illum'd,
As if some angel wing had swept the sky.
Meanwhile the sinking storm that last night raged,
And tore from forest tree the bending bough,
Soothed, as some infant, softly-cradled, slept,

And heavenly calm breathed hallowed influence
round.
And thus life mirrored rose before my view,
Now cloud portentous, now returning ray,
Now darksome mountain-isle in frowning guise,
Now peaceful haven where the wavelets dance,
Sparkling in diamonds as they kiss the shore.
Lord, give me patience in the ills of life,
And faith to trust Thee with the cloud between;
It will not always blow, nor ever frown,
The bow of Promise gleams athwart the storm.

Loneliness.

YES, pensive Hawker, thou hast truly sung,
"The Poet must be all and aye alone"—
Alone, that is, amidst the sons of earth,
And yet surrounded by the hosts of heaven.
Deep in the dark recess of serpentine,
'Neath arch of marble, polished by the wave,
Where crystal waters sparkle on the shore,
And sigh in parting with the silver sand;—
Here echo symphonies from golden harps
Which angel hands are sweeping all around;
And when they silent pause, "a small still voice"
Thrills through the ravished soul, as when of old
Gennesaret's billows bore on thousand crests
The whisper of Emmanuel—"It is I!"

See Life of Hawker, of Morwenstowe, by Baring Gould, page 213; also Memoir by Dr. Lee, page 185.

Olney Revisited.

(Inscribed to the Reverend John Piercy Langley.)

OLNEY! once more thy long-loved spire I view,
And find each fond remembrance fresh and true,
Though years successive, like the drops that fall,
Have melted in time's waters, each and all.
Then but a youth, with parents dear I came
These haunts to see! long only known by name;
And as I wander where I wandered then,
Their sweet companionship surrounds again.
As e'en from bowers on high they softly smiled,
Pleased in the pleasure of their cherished child.
Olney, like cabinet antique thou art,
Rich in the souvenirs of fame and heart.
Each drawer I open breathes its own perfume,
Richer than roses in their vernal bloom:
Cowper and Unwin both again are here,
Hesketh and Austen each once more appear;
Newton and Scott successively arise,
Bull and Throckmorton stand before mine eyes;
Now with the poet through the Weston grove,
I tread the pathway to the cool "alcove,"
Now meekly listen to the sage divine,
Mid gathered concourse in the sacred shrine.

Within yon house, three-storied, o'er the way,
The Bard of Ouse beguiled the tedious day.
On "Truth," on "Task," on ballad or conceit,
Rich in their pathos, sparkling in their wit;
Here, from his pen those melting numbers flowed,
Recording parents both returned to God.
Here, when the merrier mood alternate came,
John Gilpin's horsemanship acquired its fame;
Here, in yon summer-house so snugly small,
Modestly rising 'neath the garden wall,
Immortal Homer gathered British bays,
As his Greek story spoke in English lays.
Clifton and Yardley, Emberton once more,
While I your well known scenes to-day explore,
Rush to remembrance lengthened periods flown,
Like rapid bookleaves by some breeze back
blown.
And yet, perchance, of all the visions true,
Oft seen by fancy, now in actual view,
None are more sacred than the memories fair
That rise before me on the Parsonage stair;—
Here in succession trod the honoured feet
Of those who tenanted this blest retreat—
Newton, and Scott, and Bean, and Moses Brown,
In the past century of high renown;
And last, not least, my grandsire mild and sage,
Ardent in youth, and calm in riper age.

Like brook impetuous in its earlier force,
Stiller and deeper in its after course.
'Twas a choice privilege accorded me,
Within the renovated sanctuary,
To worship with the living o'er the dead,
And render praise for blessings richly shed;
To preach Christ's gospel from that pulpit-throne,
Which erst my grandsire claimed and called his own.
To join in melody with tuneful choir,
Of hymn and sacred song from Olney Lyre;
To blend with offspring-faithful that arise,
"Sons of those parents passed into the skies."
Langley, may days be thine of peace and length,
And may thy bended "bow abide in strength,"
With string anointed evermore to deal
Those wondrous arrows which by wounding heal!

Separation and Re-union.

TWO sparkling rills gushed forth from out the Tarn,
Fed by the rain-drops and the virgin snows,
Where the lone eagle 'neath the soaring cairn
Seeks in the silence his sublime repose.
At first the twin-born streams together broke
From the dark margin of the mountain-mere,
And kindred melody in concert woke
Borne on the breezes of the desert drear,
Till, sundered by a rock that midway fell,
The brooks divided in their fond embrace!
Each down the hollow of its separate dell
Pursues in solitude its onward race.
At length, where woodlands sleep mid meadows green,
Beneath the shoulder of the cloud-capt height,
The sister rivulets once more are seen,
And meeting waters in the vale unite;
And gliding sinuous in a wider stream,
Through shadowy coppice and through smiling lea,
Their blending wavelets, lit by sunset gleam,
Mingle for ever in their kindred sea.
Thus friends of common soul, in earlier days,

From the same source descending from above,
Alike in sympathies, in tastes, in ways,
Rush forth together in their confluent love;
Till jealous circumstance, like rising rock,
Or time, or distance interrupts their flow;
And so, a season parted by the shock,
Each sadly single on its course must go;
Yet, in the valley of maturer life,
Where lengthened shadows slumber on the hill,
And, hushed in silence sinks the storm of strife,
Behold again soft friendship's blending rill,
The beam of heaven illumes its cresting wave,
Swelling responsive to the golden sea,
Where streams still other flow from every cave,
To meet and mingle in Immensity!

A Father's Welcome to a Returning Daughter.

WELCOME, my darling, to thy home,
Welcome as flowers in May;
Of all that go and all that come
Dearer art thou than they!

Welcome as streamlet from the hill
That sparkles in each wave,
Whence pendant flowerets drink their fill,
Rejoicing as they lave.

Welcome as note of tuneful thrush
Or nightingale to me,
Who may not from each verdant bush
In sweetness rival thee.

Ye angels wave each radiant wing,
Ye saints look down from high,
Sweet Saviour, smile while thus we sing,
Benignant in the sky.

Quantock with my Child.

WE climbed again each heathery height
On hillsides lone and wild;
I found once more my old delight,
For I was with my child.

And seated on the sunny brae,
Amidst the summer hours,
She paused upon our upward way
To twine the mountain flowers.

Then a sad thought, like passing cloud,
A moment floated by;
Thus to myself I spake aloud,
As dimmed the tear mine eye.

My child herself, like blossom fair,
Is gathered from my mountain;
The glory of my home-parterre,
The sparkle of my fountain!

And then, methought, my child is Thine,
My Saviour, Thine for ever;
And so, in truth, she's still more mine,
Since nought from Christ can sever!

And if she binds around Thy Cross
Some flowers, forlorn and broken,
I must not heed my life-long loss,
As if of wrath the token:

But rather must I bless the love
Which cheers amid the chastening,
And climb on still towards heights above,
To which we both are hastening.

A moment with Thee on the mount
Where glow the beams of glory,
Will bid us each no more recount
The turns of life's sad story.

A Bard Criticised.

"TRUE friendship is a gordian knot
"Which angel hands have tied,
"By heavenly skill its *texture* wrought,
"Who can its *folds* divide?

"In vain Death's all-triumphant sword
"May strive the *links* to sever,
"The union of the twisted cord
"In heaven shall last for ever."

So sang the lay of poet fair,
The force of words forgetting,
We render thanks for jewel rare,
But not for jewel's setting.

"*Texture*" and "*folds*" within a knot
We should not have expected,
And "*links*" in strings we had forgot
Might ever be detected!

Pray, Muse, forgive our poor essay
To give the gem its casket,
To place upon this summer day
Thy flower within its basket.

True friendship is a gordian knot
Which angel hands have tied,
By heavenly skill the *union* wrought,
Who shall the *bond* divide?

In vain Death's all-triumphant sword
May strive the *threads* to sever,
The twining of the twisted cord
In heaven shall last for ever?

On the receipt of my Daughter's Picture out of Scotland.

YES! those dear lips have language, though no more
I catch their accents as in days of yore ;
They gladden other ears remote from mine,
I may not envy since the choice was thine!
Like bard of Olney, when that portrait came,
Which bore beneath it a lost mother's name,
Spell-bound by thine I take the willing pen
For an hour's converse with my child again.
Fondly remembered is that vernal morn,
When like some May-flower was my maiden born ;
Each matin songster poured its melting lay,
Each fragrant blossom smiled on every spray :
When first I clasped thee in parental arms
I saw in transport all thy mother's charms ;
E'en in soft infancy the gentle grace
Seemed as if stolen from that mother's face.
And as in after years the features grew,
And like the opening bud expansion knew,
The likeness deepened, yet not that alone,—
There came besides it glances all thine own.
Thus branching brooklet from the parent rill
Forms its own channel down the heathery hill,

And genders ferns, and mosses only found
Where rippling murmurs of its waters sound.
Methinks e'en now I see thee on the lawn,
Sporting like some gazelle or sylvan fawn,
Or culling daisies with thy brother's aid,
Or stringing cowslips for a golden braid,
Amongst those bonnie locks around to twine,
That thickly clustered o'er that brow of thine.
And thus the years of childhood swiftly passed,
Like other visions fair—too bright to last;
Riper intelligence succeeding grew,
Till in the daughter dear the friend I knew;
My griefs, my joys, my schemes, my hopes she shared,
As thoughts and feelings we so oft compared:
I lived again, as when to me was given
That sainted father, now returned to heaven!
Closest communion for a season came,
Relations altered, but the bliss the same.
But He who knows how best our steps to guide,
Such constant intercourse awhile denied,
Lest to each other we should dare to give
That love the Saviour should alone receive.
So have you seen some barque with snowy sail
Torn from its consort by the rising gale,
Sundered by billow of terrific form,
The liquid mountain of the raging storm.

Yet it is given anon in calmer flow
To either vessel side by side to go,
And then hereafter when the voyage is past,
Safely to enter the same port at last.
Annie, my child, this blest resemblance dear
Shall make me fancy thou once more art here,
And as it ever hangs before mine eye
It shall in vision half thyself supply.
May He who left His glorious throne above,
Himself divesting of all else but love,
Accept the offering of thy life bestowed,
A willing sacrifice, through Christ to God!
Go on thy way lost sinners to reclaim,
To teach the little ones to lisp His name,
To heal the sick, and in those sick to see
Members of Him who gave Himself for thee.
Rejoice that virtually our faith is one,
Christ is our hope, and Christ our Lord alone.
We walk in labyrinths awhile below,
Yet towards the centre we would daily go.
Here a thin line may sunder, but when there,
Divisions terminate and melt in air;
As in the bosom of some verdant vale,
Whence wakes from linden grove the perfumed gale,
The confluent streamlets rush from every hill,
And one majestic river help to fill,

So in the deepness of that dear embrace,
So widely opened through abounding grace,
All doubt and darkness shall for ever cease,
And love shall triumph in unbroken peace!

Wildersmouth.

IN early childhood first I viewed
These rugged rocks and foaming sea,
And with that sainted father stood,
Who erst was all the world to me.

Each vivid memory of the past
Is rising beautiful and bright;
Visions of life too fair to last,
Glances of morning's treacherous light.

In budding youth again I came
With chosen friends long passed away;
Familiar still each cherished name,
Fresh every feature to this day.

Then with my little ones I strayed
By soaring cliff and sounding shore,
The mimic fleet with sails arrayed
Some rocky basin to explore.

And now, once more alone I stand,
Feasting mine eyes with land and sea,
Watching the wavelets on the strand
Approaching frolicsome and free.

The tides of life are ebbing fast,
The ship comes straining towards the bay,
May I like her my anchor cast
When waves and winds have passed away!

On a White Violet, sent me by a Friend.

SAY, canst thou be a child of earth,
Floweret so fragrant and so fair,
Claimest thou not celestial birth,
Culled from the sweets that blossom there?

Or if terrestrial soil have nursed
Thy gentle fronds of virgin snow,
Some angel found a spot uncursed,
Planted thee there and bade thee grow!

"Nay, 'tis not so," the herb replied,
"Cradled with thee in dust and clay,
We violets, like all beside,
Arise, rejoice, and pass away.

"Yet ere such withering, I to thee
My parable would mutely tell,
The whispering seraphs gave it me
Down in the silence of my dell.

"Low on the bank, beside the stream,
Kissed by the waters on their way,
They bade me mark where 'neath the beam
My other self all blushing lay.

"Yon plant, said they, empurpled glows,
Whilst gleamest thou in silver sheen,
Canst thou to us the cause disclose?—
Nay, 'tis beyond thy thoughts we ween!

"Listen! the purple flower is He
Who purpled by thy sins became,
Far fairer in Himself than thee:
He bore thy curse, and took thy shame.

"Thou art His Church, all pure and white,
Washed in the crimson of His blood;
This is the secret of thy light,
Borrowed from an Incarnate God."

I thank thee, sister, for thy gift,
Which raiseth thought from earth to heaven;
In gratefulness thy soul to lift
Such thoughts expression thus is given.

On the Smile of an Infant in Baptism.

I HELD beside the font that new-born child,
She fixed her infant eye and softly smiled,
As if she caught the words of faith and prayer,
Breathed on our Easter-Day by sponsors there!

Say, did some angel glide our ranks between,
From courts above, by mortal eye unseen,
And whispering in the words they speak in heaven,
Tell to that babe of grace celestial given?

Say, did they point her to that risen Lord
Who woos the infant by His tender Word,
And share with Him that sweet unearthly smile
That lit those gentle features each meanwhile?

God bless thee, Ethel, from this Easter-Day,
In life thy solace, and in death thy stay;
Claim with the Crucified the cross-renown,
Till with the Risen thou dost share the crown!

Ober the Border.

THERE are who ever with them bear
Some fancied wish, or sordid care,
And darken life's uncertain sky
Like sullen clouds that frown on high.
There are the happier souls, who seem
Radiant as morn's celestial beam,
Who kindle round them as they go,
The vernal smile and summer glow;
And such within the hostel here,
'Neath Melrose ivied walls appear:
Companion bland and scornful guest,
With care, or captious mood opprest.
We entered at approach of night,
With the first beam of "pale moonlight,"
Far-famed Saint David's ruined "aisle,"
Wrapt in each solemn thought meanwhile.
We marked fair Cynthia's earliest ray,
Stealing along the arches grey,
Till glistening drops of silver-shower
Fell on the shattered "Central Tower."
The "pillared lances garland-bound"
Soared stately from the mossy ground;

And "distant Tweed," as sings the lay,
Ran "*raving*" on his nightly way!
Before the shrine, in silent prayer,
Above the dead that slumber there,
We sent the secret wish on high,
From roofless fane to star-lit sky.
Scarce had the gentle morning breeze
Stirred the young leaflet on the trees,
Ere towards the minstrel's cherished home,
As votive pilgrims would we roam.
Softly above the winding Tweed
Where woody braes a space recede,
'Neath Eildon's triple crest on high
The gentle Abbotsford doth lie.
Romance in stone and lime it stands,
Creation of its poet's hands,
Spell-bound we pass from hall to hall
Gazing on each enscutchioned wall.
With trophies hung and armour bright,
All glimmering in the glowing light,
Which from each storied pane doth pour,
Shedding its tints on marble floor.
Admonished by advancing day,
Up Etterick we pursue our way;
Till soft "Glenkinnon's rill" is won,
Murmuring beneath its bridge of stone.
Here "Needpath Fell" in front projects,

And with his heathery arm protects
The modest home Scott called his own,
When sending forth his "Marmion."
Fair "Ashestiel," in thy embrace
I seem thy cherished lord to trace,
To gaze with him a "down the linn
Which hems the little garden in,"
And catch the drops of silvery spray
The brooklet scatters on its way;
To join the sports of "mountain child,"
"Those imps so hardy, bold, and wild."
Nor could we bid the fond farewell
To brae, and brook, and ferny dell,
Till o'er the ashes of the dead
A tributary tear was shed.
O hallowed Dryborough, lone and grey,
With the last lights of lingering day,
When shadows lengthened down thy nave
We knelt beside the poet's grave.
The arching trees cast silent gloom
Around the precincts of the tomb,
And requiem sang the murmuring Tweed
Betwixt the copse-wood and the mead.
Melrose! I ne'er may come again
To rest within thy fair domain;
Then take this garland ere it fade,
And with the dew that gems thy glade

Give it a perfume fresh and free,
As if entwined from out thy lea,
And bid it henceforth fragrance claim
In breathing thy immortal name!

Autumnal Gleamings.

THE boding clouds hung low on tree and tower,
While sullen mist-wreaths floated through the sky,
Portentous heralds of the tempest nigh;
Yet ere the first drop fell of autumn shower
O'er the lone pine or on the lowly flower,
A gleam through Heaven's gate darted from on high,
And lit up yon wild down resplendently,
Till each weird cave became an angel's bower.
I gazed in transport, following far the ray
That flung its lustre o'er the angry main,
Forgot at once the dark tumultuous day,
Heedful no longer of descending rain;
For said I to my soul, "just such is Faith
That gilds with glory e'en the shades of death!"

Home, Sweet Home.

THERE are who leave their ancient home
In foreign lands afar to roam,
And feast their eye 'neath mountain pine
From snowy Alp or Appenine;
To glide beneath the "Bridge of Sighs"
In gondola, where Venice lies,
To view each painting rich and rare
In studios of Florence fair;
To wander through Eternal Rome,
And gaze upon Saint Peter's dome,
Or mark where Strasbourg's soaring fane
Lifts to the clouds its topmost vane;
Or ask, "Did skill of sprite or fay
Create thee, beautiful Beauvais?"
Yet be it mine through life to dwell
'Mid cherished scenes remembered well,
Where tower, nor tree, nor glen, nor stone,
Nor sinks, nor soars to me unknown!
When worn by long-continued toil
Mine be the rest of Aberfoyle;
In Newark's "beechen bowers" to stray,
Where Etterick stretches far away;
Helvellyn and Scawfell for me,
Soft Grasmere's Vale and Esthwaite's lea,

And Ingleborough's broad incline,
Or Cheviot's undulating line.
Few goodlier Goshen's gazers greet
Than those which lie 'neath Malvern's feet.
No panorama may compare
With Dunkery's prospect high in air.
Give me blue Mendip's arching form,
Whether in sunshine or in storm,
Or Quantock's groves, where angels stray,
Awhile delayed on mercy's way;
For me let Lincoln's booming bell
"Fling o'er the fen its ponderous knell,"
And Chichester and Sarum rise,
Pointing their needles to the skies;
Or thou, old Wells, with triple towers,
Lichened and stained with frequent showers,
Which circling Mendip's heights detain
On their way landward from the main.
Mine be the "Crook," to childhood dear,
With Compton nestling in the rear;
Mine the more modest verdant knoll,
The spire below, on high the pole;
And mine the home two miles away
Where first these eyes beheld the day;
And mine the manor, church, and tower,
And wind-stripped elm and summer bower;
And mine the visions that remain,

And memories that recur again ;
And mine the sacred spell that binds
To life known scenes accordant minds.
No throstle warbles on the spray,
No blackbird pipes through summer-day,
No cawing rook, or twittering wren
Can sound but childhood comes again,
And intervening periods fade,
Like shadows on the mountains laid.
O Recollection ! kindly given
To cheer our pilgrimage to heaven,
'Tis thine the mystic charm to throw
O'er God's objective world below.

Written for the Album of a Friend,

In continuation of some Lines on the Mountains.

IF such the summits that arise
To grace the lowly plain of earth,
Say what are those above the skies,
With prospects of celestial birth?

Immortal verdure clothes their sides,
Bask their bright peaks in cloudless day,
Down their soft slopes the streamlet glides
That sings rejoicing on its way.

May it be ours those hills to climb,
To join the hosts that gather there
From the celestial heights sublime,
To gaze o'er sinless regions fair!

The Princess Alice and the Maternal Kiss.

SAY not, "Infection in that fatal kiss
Robbed us of her so early called away;"
Rather some angel from the realms of bliss,
Unseen, embraced her on that wintry day.

Her place was waiting in the bowers above,
Beside the "Parent passed into the skies:"
She caught the whisper of a Saviour's love,
And now for ever in his bosom lies.

Fraternal Memories.

Inscribed to the Rev. T. Grey Clarke, R.D., Vicar of Odiham, Hampshire.

SUCCEEDING periods hurry by
Like vapours floating through the sky,
Which, borne on pinions of the wind,
Leave scarce a lingering trace behind.
And can it be with us, my Grey,
That forty years have passed away
Since first in Academic-Grove
We owned reciprocated love?
Where Christ Church elms embracing twine,
O'erarching in their lordly line,
Or Maudlin shades breathe soft repose
Where Cherwell's gentle streamlet flows.
Methinks once more I climb with thee
Headington Hill to Pullen's tree,
Or distant Shotover essay,
With Matins o'er on holiday,
Where stretched the verdant turf along,
We weave a tale or raise a song,
And, oft delighted, turn to see
Athwart the intervening lea,

Each dome and spire with soaring vane,
Seated all queen-like on the plain.
O, Alma Mater! yet more dear
To me with each revolving year,
I cannot these loved scenes recall,
So faithfully remembered all,
But tears unbidden fast must rise,
And yet unchecked within these eyes.
Hast thou not registered the day
When far from Oxford's halls away,
Nestling beneath the swelling down
We caught thy native tower and town?
Where Winton lifts her lengthy pile,
With steeple low but lofty aisle.
And thence, by undulating way,
'Mid shadows of departing day,
We sought the village in the dell
Which thou and I long loved so well,
Where scarce a sound can stillness break
But some fond memory must awake.
Alas! how changed its aspect now,
Since snows have gathered on our brow.
No more within that fair retreat
The twanging harp-strings pilgrims greet,
The soft piano's notes are mute
All silent the neglected flute;
No Anna trips it through the bowers,

No Susie culls the fruits and flowers,
No venerated parent's voice
Bids a blithe family rejoice.
He slumbers with his kindred dust,
Waiting the rising of the just.
In later years no memories bright
Recur with more endeared delight
Than those with Selborne's groves entwined,
Leaving their grateful hues behind.
Glowed richly red the autumn day
That on the beechen "hanger" lay,
While here and there a leaflet sere
Betokened the declining year.
Thy willing hand and ready zeal
Amply provided for the meal
Which on the mossy bank lay spread,
The green slope rising overhead.
The ancient church and modest manse,
The village "Plestor's" smooth expanse,
The naturalist's sequestered bower,
Just opposite the lowly tower
That seemed within the trees beside,
Like maiden coy its head to hide.
And then the drive succeeding all
To Gurdon's ruined feudal hall,
Which erst lone Wolmer's wilds surveyed,
Beneath the sylvan lodge out laid,

Where pathless woodlands even still
The valley shroud and climb the hill.
Scarcely a vestige can be seen
Of what has once the "Temple" been,
Which Gurdon reared, and William gave
To his stern Norman-vassal brave.
Thus snow-flakes melt before they fall,
And sunbeams vanish on the wall!
One shadow rests upon the day
That Selborne links with autumn ray.
Thy faithful steed, his labours o'er,
Will bear us to such scenes no more;
Like "Gallant Grey," in Trossac's glen,
"He ne'er may stretch fleet limbs age'n;"
Yet mourn him not, repress the sigh,
Or tender tear that dims thine eye;
For she, thy brightest and thy best,
Remains as then to make thee blest—
As fond, as fair, as winsome still
As when we climbed the beech-clad hill.
Oh! while a daughter's maiden glee
Is of our home the minstrelsy,
And while the pillow of her rest
Is found upon a father's breast,
And while that father may espy
The love-light dance within her eye,
No loss nor trouble may befall
To darken the domestic hall.

'Tis tempting to prolong the lay,
Converse indulge with thee, my Grey ;
But thou and I in armour bright
Life's battles have engaged to fight :
No carpet-knights, in sooth, are we,
In silken doublets gay and free;
The hosts without are clamouring all,
We must obey their ceaseless call,
Hush the soft sound and still the shell,
Wave the warm hand, and breathe farewell.
Yet can I not lay down the pen,
But I must take it up agen,
To add kind greetings to thy dame
Who bears the noble Craven name,
Who knows not that illustrious line
That erst with Beaufort would combine ?
And yet gained less than what it gave.
Virtuous and loyal, bold and brave,
Craven, and Stillington, and Grey,
Gurdon and Coventry are they,
With whom our sons may kindred claim,
Inscribed upon the scroll of fame.
Yet higher honours may they share,
And read their names recorded there,
Where life's fair leaves unclasped unfold
Their lustrous characters of gold !

Beside a Sister's Bier.

I saw thee at the altar stand,
A fair and lovely bride,
And claimed myself thy sister's hand
That same blest Easter-tide.

Together in that sacred shrine
We broke the mystic bread,
And shared the cup of hallowed wine,
Ere on life's course we sped.

I saw thee laid once more in white,
Majestically still,
Though closed that beaming eye so bright,
That sparkled at thy will.

Again beside thine early bier
We met our dying Lord,
And dried the sympathetic tear,
As we fulfilled His word.

When next we meet, with Him reclined
At banquet of His love,
O may we both each other find
In robes of white above!

Farewell to Scotland, after my Grandson's Baptism.

Inscribed to the Rev. Vincent Lewis Rorison, M.A., Incumbent of St. John's, Forfar.

Ne'er saw Scotland smile so fair
As when I rose this morning,
I left the gladsome sunshine there
Her hills and dales adorning.

The air was clear, the skies were bright,
Stood forth each goodly mountain,
Bathed in the gush of golden light
That streamed from heaven's full fountain.

The shadow of some passing cloud
Stole o'er the hills reflected,
Like loving kiss by fair allowed,
In its own act detected.

Proud Perth, defended by its Tay,
Her banners was unfurling,
And, gleaming 'neath the Ochills, lay
The rival towers of Stirling.

Linlithgo in her gayest dress
Seemed yet a "royal dwelling,"
And bade a Southeron tongue confess,
She still reigns "All excelling."

Yet statelier did Dun Edin rise
This morning as I found her,
Beneath the glow of autumn skies,
The queen of all around her.

But humbler Forfar holds my heart
Fast in her close embraces,
Remembrance that declines to part—
Each cherished scene retraces—

Of darling child, and worthy son,
And gentle infant sleeping,
Whose little life on earth begun
We yield to heavenly keeping.

We left the cross upon thy brow,
Traced in baptismal water;
Wear it, my son, for aye from now,
In days of strife and slaughter,—

In days of toil, in days of rest,
In days of joy or sadness,
Till in thy Saviour's presence blest,
Sorrow dissolves in gladness!

Annie's Dream.

I dreamt that long I watched beside
Some sister's early bier,
And as responsive night winds sighed,
I dropt the silent tear.

I feared to lift the veil of death
That covered her from sight,
And almost held my rising breath
Throughout that solemn night.

But with the morn I courage took
The face-cloth to remove,
When the still feature's every look
Told but of joy and love.

And then methought she lived again,
I sought her and she fled!
No longer might she now remain
As numbered with the dead.

Annie! thy precious dream supplies
A parable most true;
For thus before my inward eyes
It riseth to my view.

At first, grim death all frightful seems,
I turn me from its face,
Nor dare I e'en in midnight dreams
Its ghastly features trace.

But Faith within the darksome shroud
Finds beams of light below;
As erst upon the angry cloud
She traced the Covenant bow.

And glancing on the vacant tomb
She finds the prisoner fled,
For Resurrection's morn hath come,
And death itself is dead!

To my Lympsham Bells.

ALOFT within my old Church tower
I placed ye, tuneful five;
Once more the belfry hour by hour
With music seems alive.

Your ancient forbears so long hung
That melody had fled,
Whether some wedding peal were rung,
Or knell to mourn the dead.

Regenerate now with melting voice
Ye woo the swains to pray,
And bid the region round rejoice
Upon the festal day.

But that a still more perfect stave
Might from our steeple sound,
A virgin sister-sixth I gave,
To swell the gladsome round.

Yet when this new-born sister came,
Her voice sang strange and shrill;
The note was clear, the key the same,
Far from accordant still!

But when the tuner's magic hand
  Two hours had worked one day,
It seemed as if at his command
  My six rolled right away.

Sweetly those sisters singing true
  In harmony combined,
When Cynthia shews herself to view
  Fling music on the wind!

Edith and her Two Homes.

BETWEEN my "homes" no rivalry must be,
Each for its own dear sake is dear to me;
My home in England, where I drew my breath,
My home in Scotland, where I live till death.

One home I cherish, the idea the same,
And still identical the hallowed name,—
Home with my husband, whom my fond heart gains,—
Home with my father who that heart retains.

Erewhile my home on high I hope to win,
Beyond these treacherous scenes of death and sin;
And in that house above for ever view
Home of the Bridegroom and the Father too!

Addressed to my Wife on her Birthday from my Sick Bed.

MY frame is weak, my spirit low,
The members rise not free,
Yet thy dear name shall bid them flow
When tuned my harp to thee.

One note upon thy natal-day
Must greet thee from my lyre;
Turn not thy gentle ear away
While I to sing aspire.

The rapid years rush hasting on,
Like some fast-rolling river;
Soon will time's course with us be flown,
And then—the long for ever!

But if with Jesus we are one,
Our troth to Him but plighted,
Our life will then but be begun
With Him for aye united.

O that within His home above
Our children all may find us,
And in the presence of His love
Not one be left behind us!

Life but Childhood Repeated.

ON the fair beach the trusting child
His rampart rears of sand and clay,
Regardless lest the waters wild
Should rise and sweep his toil away.

And though at last his fragile tower
Has fallen in the swelling flood,
Once more, beguiled by summer hour,
He plants another where it stood.

And thus the sanguine sons of men
Build but on life's uncertain sand,
And often foiled, erect again
The cherished scheme which cannot stand.

O lead me to that changeless rock
That firmly breasts the dashing sea;
Waves may assail but cannot shock,
Jesu! if I am fixed on Thee.

Falling Bells.

THE music of the falling chime
Recalls each scene of by-gone time—
Now eddying swell, now sinking sound,
Thrilling the soul in rolling round.

Ye tuneful six, from steeple grey,
Have gladdened my sad heart to-day;
And woke once more that deeper joy
That seems refined from earth's alloy.

O tell me, wise Philosophy,
Why droops the heart 'midst revelry;
But ofttimes midst surroundings sad,
Why is the soul so deeply glad?

The mystery wouldst thou seek to know?
So is it ordered here below;
No star can shed its mystic light
Till darkness shrouds the skies with night.

The hurricane the earth must shake
Ere yet "the still small voice" can wake;
If heaven's bright arch its tints would twine,
On the black cloud the bow must shine.

No spring-tide flowers can deck the spray
Till winter drear has held its sway;
Birds from that bush their lays must pour
Where icicles have hung before.

The snow-drop blossoms by the way
Where long the frozen snow-drift lay;
Descending rains must sweep the fell
That brooks may warble down the dell.

This, after all, the cause may be,
Not yet from bondage is earth free,
"The creature" waits for that blest hour
That vanquishes corruption's power.

Then cloudless skies shall gild the span
That arches o'er redeemèd man;
Deep seas of bliss rise swelling o'er,
Without a shallow or a shore.

Rich melodies around shall float,
Unmingled with a minor note;
While quenchless suns that never set
Shall bathe each golden minaret,

And flash from out each sparkling stone
That garnishes the city's zone;
And lustre lends to that deep flood
That girds the paradise of God.

O Jesu ! through the pearly gate
May I, Thy servant, wend and wait ;
And, ransomed by Thy blood alone,
Wonder and worship at Thy throne !

Written on a Lord's Day Morning,

When detained at home by sickness.

THE land-locked bay receives the tide
Advancing from the boundless main;
At last by blue waves satisfied
That break upon its beach again.

Each rocky basin brimming o'er
Rejoices in the billows bound;
E'en the still caverns on the shore
Vocal with ocean's voice resound.

And thus, though now detained at home,
Yet one with the great Church of God,
I hail the waters as they roam,
And bless the Sabbath's golden flood.

No limits of earth's narrow clime
Celestial seas can ever know;
Freed from the bounds of space and time,
Forth from immortal founts they flow.

Angels along their margin glide,
Seraphs and saints rest harping there;
While pilgrims the same shores beside
With their exalted kindred share.

Jesu! Thine all-embracing grace
Hath blended Thy whole Church with Thee;
Thou dost in all Thy members trace
But one unbroken company.

Advent Sunday Morning at Christ Church, Oxford.

Inscribed to Miss FRANCES HEURTLEY.

I SAW the Sabbath-lustre smile
Through storied panes of every hue,
Kindling to life each vaulted aisle,
Bringing each sculptured arch to view.

The holy chant of mystic song
In faultless melody awoke,
As if some angel host among
These consecrated courts had spoke.

God's herald from the pulpit-throne
Proclaimed the Advent of his Lord
On that dread day when He alone
Shall judge the nations by His Word.

And then, the benediction given,
The organ raised the parting strain,
As if the golden harps of heaven
Had breathed their harmonies again.

The service past, the sacred shrine
With my fair guide I mute surveyed;
Marked where successive styles combine—
Norman with pointed overlaid.

Here stalwart column, slender pier,
And later arch of after age;
Traceried windows tier on tier,
Admiring eyes and lips engage.

O may we in the House on High
Form "pillars to depart no more,"
Join the glad throng above the sky,
And love, and wonder, and adore.

An Easter Offering

To an early friend, to whose joint care the custody of a cherished grave is entrusted.

AND is a grave the mystic link
That blends my sympathies with thine?
Henceforward then I will not shrink
Till such a sepulchre be mine.

One grave there is—one holy grave—
That binds the ransomed Church in one,
There lay the Lord that came to save,
Descending from His heavenly throne.

That vacant cemetery to-day
No aspect wears of mortal prison,
For the dark stone that o'er it lay
Is rolled away and He is risen.

The Grateful Redbreast.

To my Daughter EMMA.

WHEN the hoar frost on the spray,
Told of the bleak wintry day,
Hungry would the robin come
For my Emma's morning crumb.

Now the Spring again is here
And the green leaf buds appear,
Pausing on his grateful wing
At her window would he sing.

What a moralist is he,
Thus that robin speaks to me,
Nurtured by thy heavenly friend,
Let thy praise to Him ascend!

The Kilve Shore.

Inscribed to the Rev. Hay Sweet Escott, M.A., Rector of Kilve-cum-Stringston.

IF peace I seek, oppressed with strife,
Or solace midst surrounding care,
Or respite from the toils of life,
Where shall I find them?—tell me where!

Follow the rivulet that flows
Down Kilve's green valley to the sea;
Its very murmur breathes repose,
Its every wave is melody.

No angry billows surge the main,
No tempest's voice is heard to roar;
The Channel seems one crystal plain
'Twixt this and yonder Cambrian shore!

The fleecy cloud is stealing slow
O'er queenly Quantock's swelling side;
Now cradled in the Coombe below,
Now stretching o'er the mountain wide.

The modest belfry hides its head
The ivied Priory beside,
Around it sleep the silent dead,
Who the Archangel's trump abide.

I wonder not that Wordsworth found
  Sweet solace in this soft retreat,
Where hospitalities abound,
  And cherished friendship's whispers greet.

Escott! long may thy lot be cast
  Within Kilve's manse, serene and free,
Till thou shalt rise to join at last
  "The minstrels on the glassy sea!"

"Not my will, but Thine be done."

YET is not wish vouchsafed and given,
But rather wish in love denied
That brings its anti-past of Heaven
And makes me calm and satisfied.

Long did I struggle for my will,
Like fretful child for fancied toy,
But He has whispered, "Peace, be still,"
And seek in Me to find thy joy!

Now, while the tempest howls on high,
Like Peter, would I find my rest
In the blest thought that He is nigh
And calls me to His loving breast.

Teach me, O Lord, Thine own sweet prayer,
As years and cares come rolling on,
Breathed in the stilly midnight air,
"My Father, let Thy will be done!"

What is, is Best.

LET things be as they are,
Our Father's choice is best;
Henceforward it is better far,
To leave with Him the rest.

I wander through a maze of care,
Hedged up oft seems my way;
But with His hand to guide me there,
I cannot go astray.

The mist hangs heavy on the hill,
Sombre and dark the sky;
But all is ordered by His will,
And He is ever nigh.

A veil is alway o'er mine eyes,
But He securely leadeth;
By His own pathway to the skies,
And here protects and feedeth.

Thus be it mine in trusting faith
To follow where He guides me,
And leave to Him in life and death
The future that betides me.

The Cloud-capt Guardians of Lochmaree.

I left the cloud upon the crest,
With brightness on the brae,
And cradled on the mountain's breast,
Thus spake the mist to-day:—

"I am the incense of yon hill,
"The deserts tribute given,
"When morning breaketh, lone and still,
"He lifts his cairn to heaven.

"He may not penetrate the sky,
"Thus I descend concealing,
"Lest the dark mysteries on high
"His crags should be revealing.

"And yet in blessing do I come,
"Diffusing all abroad,
"And blending this terrestrial home
"With paradise of God.

"My heaven-born drops the lichens drink,
"I irrigate the fern;
"Ascending from the weird Tarn's brink,
"I back to heaven return.

"Leaving the mountain fresh and clear,
"Radiant with God's communion,
"To tell to pilgrim far and near
"The blest results of union.

"For not on Zion's height alone
"Hermon's soft dew descendeth,
"To Albion, Erin, Caledon,
"The fragrant shower extendeth."

Written at Midnight,

During the sinking of a hurricane.

THE angry storm is hushing now,
It sweeps less wildly by;
Cynthia looks forth from out the cloud,
And lights the midnight sky!

The tattered sail is flapping less,
The barque less madly driven
Then when she bore against the gale,
Whereby her mast was riven.

The forest tree is scarcely swayed
Beneath the sinking blast,
And every swell, and sigh, and moan,
Sounds softer than the last.

Thus years are hastening my repose
And soon the winds shall cease,
The billows rock themselves to rest,
And slumber into peace!

And not a voice upon the shore
Shall sound into my soul,
But *His* who bids the waves be still,
My spirit's wounds be whole.

And I shall look into His face
And see His radiant smile,
And all earth's hurricanes forget,
And sorrow's waves meanwhile.

Palingenesia.

I saw the heavens dissolving,
This sin-struck earth decay,
Her dying seas departing,
Her mountains melt away.

And forth from out the chaos
New earth and heaven arise;
This clad in deathless verdure,
These bright with cloudless skies.

I marked the radiant city,
Hang in the vault o'erhead
As bride comes forth for bridegroom,
With dazzling robes bespread.

I heard the voice melodious
From out the silent air,
Proclaiming that Jehovah
Indwells that city fair.

Earth's curse gives birth to blessing,
And death itself shall die,
And scalding tears o'erflowing
Are dried in every eye.

Methought I climbed the mountain,
  Where piled on fleecy cloud,
The pearly gates unfolding,
  Displayed the city proud.

Her streets throughout are golden,
  Her walls are precious stone,
Her rivers glide in crystal
  Forth from the sapphire Throne.

Her Tree of Life unguarded
  Flings wide the healing arm,
Pendent with fruits perennial,
  Shielding from every harm.

Saviour, in this enclosure,
  May I at last find place;
Go no more out for ever,
  But see Thee face to face.

Anniversary of our Wedding-Day.

ONCE more, with gentle Spring,
Our wedding-day is here ;
The birds their carols sing
Responsive hearts to cheer.

And every sight and sound
Is glad and blythely gay,
As if both skies and ground
Would hail our nuptial day !

Some thirty changeful years
Have melted with the past,
Since first midst smiles and tears
Thy lot with mine thou cast.

What mercies from above
Those changeful years have crowned,
And still what signs of love
Declining days surround.

Athwart our evening sky
The murky clouds may roll ;
But the bright bow on high
Expands from pole to pole !

Long may I live to see
My darling at my side,
Till blend we with the company
That forms Emmanuel's Bride!

Emmanuel: "this is my Friend."

WAS brother of my soul so dear?
Was closest of my kin so near?
Hath ever friend such constant love,
On earth below, in heaven above?
Go watch within Gethsemane,
Go stand beside the ensanguined tree,
Go gaze into the vacant grave
Where lay thy Lord who died to save;
Go climb fair Olivet on high,
See Him ascend His native sky;
Go hear Him at the throne of God,
Pleading the merit of His blood;
Go read "thy name upon His hands,"
As He before the Father stands;
Go view the place prepared for thee
When from the flesh thou shalt be free;
Go number every dazzling gem
That sparkles in thy diadem;
Go listen to the golden lyre,
Chosen for thee amidst the choir,
Who evermore their tribute pay
In ceaseless song through endless day.

Then say, "Can earth or heaven beside
Rival with Thee, the Crucified?"
Thine be it now His cross to bear;
Thine be it then His crown to share;
And when to join His saints made meet,
Go cast that crown before His feet.

On Receiving a Photograph

From an absent Daughter at a time of sorrow.

OF all the gifts that Christmas brings
None is more dear than thine to me;
So birds bring spices on their wings
From fragrant isles beyond the sea.

Say,—sits dark sorrow on thy brow?
Thy countenance methinks looks sad;
Tis early years, my love, that thou
Shouldst features wear no longer glad.

Yet meet it is that poet's child
Should share those deeper moments given,
That float around like storm-clouds wild,
All-cinctured with the bow of heaven!

Commit thy sorrow to His breast
Who makes each grief of thine His own;
Then like the sea-bird calmly rest,
Who on the billow finds His throne.

Springtide at Grasmere.

Inscribed to a mutual friend of the Poet Wordsworth—and my own.

ASCENDING towards the "wishing gate,"
We paused upon the upland way,
And lingered till the hour grew late,
For there was nought to wish that day.

Behind us, to the skies arose
An amphitheatre of hill;
Beneath us, cradled in repose,
Slept the soft lake serene and still.

Spring's earliest green bade all rejoice,
From lowly fern to stately pine;
Cuckoo and throstle lent their voice
For praise-note in the mountain shrine.

The lambkins sported on the brae,
The birds flew joyous through the air;
Each moorland bee as blythe as they,
Sailed through the nectared flowrets fair.

Meanwhile, at ease on lichened stone,
Cushioned with heath and bracken green,
Sweet converse cheated moments flown
Far fleeter than their wont, I ween!

Thoughts of the present and the past;
  Expression found—now grave, now gay—
Like shadows on the mountain cast,
  Chased by the alternating ray.

May it be ours, this brief life o'er,
  On slopes of Paradise reclined,
Companionship to share once more,
  With sin and sorrow left behind.

There glory gilds the crystal sea,
  And floods the heavenly heights abroad,
The cloudless light eternally
  Diffusing from the Throne of God.

An Impromptu, addressed to W. L. R.,

On his rushing up Crook's Peak.

"RIGHT up Benlomond would he press,
And not a sob his toil confess,"
So sang Sir Walter of "the Græme,"
And now *our* Malcolm does the same!

Agile of foot, the Crook he'd climb
To feast his eye on view sublime,
And bear to Northern scenes away
Fond memories for a future day.

Despise not, friend, our lowland heights,
They bring to us their own delights;
We cannot claim to share the spell
With those who in the mountains dwell.

Yet trace we on our Mendips lone
The "bracken green and cold grey stone,"
While gentle hills of lowlier guise
Claim kin with those that pierce the skies.

Whether in South, or distant North,
Beside the Severn or the Forth,
Right welcome shall our Malcolm be,
As gowan to the summer lea!

To a Friend,

On the receipt of a Landscape Picture.

WHY picture, Mary, garnishes my wall,
Prized for the limner's sake and for its own.
As I survey I marvel at the skill
Of blended colouring and vivid touch
Which, both united, animate the scene.
Winds the lone river in its onward course,
Here flashing lustre from its glowing tide,
There dark and sombre where the beetling cliff
And over-arching bough flings deep its shade;
Yonder the ancient tower hath tales to tell
Of days long past and feuds of olden time;
Beneath the rampart, spanning the fair stream,
With triple arches stretches the rude bridge,
Down from whose moss-grown edge the crossers' gaze,
Silently musing on the refluent flood;
Or eyeing now the boat which midway rests,
With oar drawn upwards from the mirror's face,
Dropping its borrowed diamonds back again
Whence they were stolen from the crystal wave.
But what enchants me most is where beyond
The circling mountains terminate the scene,

Piled on each other, melting into sky,
And claiming kinship with those stately clouds
That on their crests enthroned look down
majestic;
Or in their silent progress shroud the peaks,
And shed their weird lights on the vales between.
Such, Mary, the objective joy thy pencil brings,
But deeper thought—more mystic, more intense,
Surges within me as again I gaze:
For such is life, awhile a sparkling stream,
With joyous wavelets glistening as they swell,
Now sombred by the cloud that hangs on high,
Or darkened by the cliff which forms its bound,
And casts its shadow as it grimly soars.
Here sport we in the fragile barque which
glides away,
And soon will bear us 'neath the ivied arch,
Which, rising from the flood so silently,
Forms but the portal to the scenes beyond.
Youthful ambition, like yon ruined tower,
Climbs to the skies from out the coppice-screen,
But soon its broken battlements have nought to
leave,
Save sad reflection on the withered fern.
Yet mark yon mountains stretching into space,
Boundless and free as skies whereon they lean,
And golden-crested when with heaven they join.

Speed on my raft along this eddying stream,
I long to plant my foot on yonder shore;
Then cherub-winged celestial heights to gain,
Beyond the mists which brood along the vale.
Hark! echoing from the hills borne down the glens
Melodious harpings fall upon mine ear;
I come! I come! those chorus-notes to swell,
And fall transported at the feet of Him
Who sits enthroned with His bright rainbow crown.

On the receipt of a lock of my Grandson's Hair.

WHENCE glows this lustre on thine hair
So brightly as I gaze meanwhile?
Say, did thy mother leave it there,
Reflection of her beaming smile?

Or did thy guardian-angel's wing
Rest gently on thy tender head,
And o'er thy cradle hovering,
A golden ray in silence shed?

Nay! 'tis a token of *His* love
That on thy velvet brow doth rest,
Who left His radiant throne above
To clasp earth's infants to His breast.

To an Early Friend,

Who had spent a portion of the Anniversary of her Wedding Day in visiting an Infirmary.

'HOW shall I spend the joyous hours
'This Anniversary with it brings?
'In woodlands gay, midst summer flowers,
'And songsters with their pencilled wings?

'Say, shall I climb the soaring height,
'And feast mine eye with land and sea,
'And seem to share each dear delight
'With some ethereal spirit free?

'Or, in the silence of some glen,
'Shall friendship's converse me engage,
'Or memory weave her charm agen,
'As trembling hand turns back life's page?

'Nay! like my Master, will I go
'Where suffering brethren shall I see;
'Beside the beds of pain and woe
'Drop the sweet tear of sympathy;—

'Chase the sad thoughts of grief away,
'Like shadows from the mountain's breast,
'When the soft smile of summer day
'Pauses amidst those shades to rest.'

So Mary once her spikenard brought,
And fragrance through the chamber shed,
The silent tear-drop fell unsought
Where the rich banquet lay outspread.

In acts of sympathetic love
Let wedding-days on earth be past,
Then share within the Home above
Heaven's marriage-festival at last!

The Albion Visit of Mother and Daughter.

Inscribed to MRS. H. STILLINGTON G. STEPHENSON,
of Cor Castle, Ireland.

IN by-gone years a gentle maid
Sailed over from the Emerald Isle.
Alas! she could not be delayed,
She tarried with us but awhile.

Like the soft sunbeam on the brae,
She smiled a moment and was gone;
We heard the songster's melting lay:
We looked, and lo! the bird was flown.

In later years that maiden's child,
The zephyrs wafted to our shore;
We will not be again beguiled,
The daughter shall return no more.

In the recesses of our towers,
Securely shall she build her nest;
The mother lingered but for hours
The daughter must *for ever* rest.

The Sister Friends.

Inscribed to Miss E. E. Cole, of Woodview.

LIKE varying shade o'er amber stream
Your maiden branches have combined,
Each made the other lovelier seem
With mingling blossoms intertwined.

Or like twin songsters of the grove,
Your answering notes from arching tree
Have sung reciprocated love
In notes of tuneful harmony.

Right meetly then from Emerald Isle
Have ye together lately come,
To gladden by your blended smile
The friends within your Albion Home.

BRENT KNOLL.

This Poem requires a few words of explanation.

It is a very juvenile production, having been written when the Author was a lad of seventeen, on leaving home for a six years' exile, after the death of a beloved father.

As it was out of print and has been asked for, it is again given to the public, but must be read with indulgence.

Brent Knoll.

"AONIAN Nymphs," my feeble voice inspire,
Nerve ye the hand that strikes a rustic lyre :
And gentle stranger kind attention pay,
While I attune my unadornéd lay.
Yon shapely Knoll that greets the traveller's eye
'Swells from the vale' and rises to the sky,
Pleasing in detail yet august in form,
Called by the mariner—"The Isle of Storm."
Be this my theme—the subject of my song—
While fingers sweep the varying chords along.
What though sad memory tells of beauties flown,
And woodlands fair that by-gone times have known,
Which now alas the climber fails to find
On the bare shoulder of the hill reclined.
What though the tower that lately crowned the
height

Lies now demolished—buried out of sight;
What though the pine that formed the upland's crest
Has drooped its head and softly sunk to rest;
What though the forest oak no more appears
Nor from the summit his proud form uprears;
Yet verdure still is found in every glade,
And hazel-nut and tangled copse-wood shade;
Cowslip and primrose still adorn each lea,
And court the visit of the passing bee,
And gurgling brook still trickles down the dell,
Though vanished now the pious hermit's cell.
And when we climb the summit of the hill
We find the same inviting prospect still,
Surrounding objects seeming ever new,
And nature smiling in her fairest hue.
Brent Knoll is like old age—if but to heaven
Each passing year has been devoutly given,
Though shorn of dignity and robbed of grace,
Though bent the frame and wrinkled deep the face,
The happy prospect still the same appears,
Nay, gathers glory with revolving years!
Loved Eminence! I mount thy breezy height
Each time I ramble with a fresh delight;
Yet oft that joy is mingled with a tear,
When I recall the recollection dear
Of by-gone scenes and happy childhood's days,
When blithe I gambolled as yon lamb that plays,

Or panting hard thy slippery summit gained,
And to complete the task each muscle strained.
What now the view that greets my ravished gaze,
That all around Jehovah's power displays;
Which beauteous portion shall I earliest trace
Of these fair lineaments of Nature's face?
Mendip! thy lengthy range first meets mine eye,
Rising from far then melting into sky.
Thy form at first a mountain's aspect wears,
Near where proud Minster its high head uprears.
Wells is thy birthplace! with its thousand rills
Which bubble forth from all surrounding hills.
O sacred spot! so made by generous heaven,
Which to thy share has choicest blessings given,
Thy city like the fair Jerusalem—
Jehovah's dearest, richest, brightest, gem,
Securely rests defended on each side
By mountain ramparts, that shall e'er abide,
When storms that rage and hurricanes that blow
Shall prostrate bastions and lay fences low,
Which art hath builded and which men have reared
Against the enemy whose force they feared;
Thy Minster's honours who can duly raise,
Or give those holy walls their meed of praise,
Who shall describe her stately towers that rise
From firm foundations to eternal skies,
Or who shall count the various saints that grace

The gorgeous niches of her western face;
Who shall depict her storied windows true,
Bedight with colours of each rainbow hue?
Vain the attempt! beyond my feeble lyre—
I can but gaze, and wonder, and admire!
Proceed we now along proud Mendip's height,
Whose every feature fills us with delight,
Now naked, rocky, barren, sterile, bare,
Now richly carpeted with bracken fair,
Now without broom, or fern, or furze-bush clad,
Now made by flower, and copse, and heather glad.
Cheddar! thy chasm next arrests our eyes,
Thy towering rocks that high and heaven-ward rise,
Which seem to scorn the lowly plain of earth,
And upward mount towards Him who gave them birth—
Say! whose the hand yon great convulsion made,
That forced through Mendip's range that rocky glade,
Was it some current vast that urged its way
Through every barrier that before it lay?
Was it some earthquake with destructive might
That cleft the mountain from its topmost height?—
Go ask the Angel Host, the place that guard,
Nor seek an answer from an humble bard,
And they will tell thee in that solemn day
When sun withdrew and hid his face away,

When on the Cross the Lamb for sinners slain
Hung in his anguish and his dying pain;
When his lips quivering in the pangs of death,
Uttered that shout which spent his latest breath,
These conscious rocks began to quiver too,
Burst from each other and exposed to view
The fertile country and the rugged shore,
Which, intercepting, they had hid before!
But other summits court a passing glance:
See yonder Peak, his pointed form advance,
Which seems to scorn a gaze on aught abroad,
And points us upward to fair Nature's God.
How oft I've clambered up yon rugged steep,
Though difficult the slippery path to keep,
When hoary frost has hung upon its brow,
And in huge flakes has fallen winter's snow;
Then in the stony rostrum I have stood,
And all around the beauteous prospect viewed;
Then mocked the orator's persuasive tongue,
And of each object in succession sung
To early friends and many a playmate dear,
Who deigned to listen and stood round to hear;
But pass we now through Shiplate's shady groves
Which seem in Mendip's bosom to repose,
Towards the wind-swept height of Bleadon Hill,
Which human hand has never toiled to till,
Though slumber here the ashes of the slain,

The Saxon victor and the vanquished Dane.
Bleadon! thy bracken forms the warrior's crest,
Marks out his tomb and blossoms o'er his breast,
And tells the traveller winding up the dell,
"'Twas here thine ancestor in battle fell!"
But! gracious audience! pardon if I stray,
Led by the Muse from Mendip's range away;
Or if abrupt I leave the towering height,
Since in the Plain my home appears in sight!
The lagging courser, when his stall he nears,
Quickens his pace, his eager head uprears,
Lightly he steps along the well-known road,
When distant seen he eyes his loved abode,
Snuffing the breeze which softer seems to come,
Because 'tis wafted from the groves of home;
Then when yon steeple greets my longing eye,
With wingèd footsteps I towards it fly,
Faster than steel impelled by loadstone's force,
To that dear object I direct my course;
How oft in childhood, when compelled to leave
My own loved birthplace, would my bosom heave
With many a heavy sigh and grief would start
Through every secret channel from my heart.
When to yon tower I've breathed a last adieu,
As rolling wheels along the turnpike flew;
How oft I've turned with trembling hand to dry
The scalding tear which gathered in mine eye:

And oh at length, when many a month has passed,
I've caught the longed-for minerets at last,
How have I hailed the soul-inspiring sight,
My spirit almost melting with delight!
And have these boyhood feelings disappeared?
Or like yon leaf which autumn's hand hath seared,
Begin they now to wither and decay?
Not so, kind reader, gentle listener—nay,
If less enthusiastic now my love,
Time hath not, cannot, the affection move
That still I cherish for my native place,
While earlier haunts with eager step I trace.
No, never shall I catch thy Tower from far,
By blaze of day, by twinkling light of star,
Without emotion kindling in my breast,
And thoughts of love and tenderness confessed.
Lympsham! to thee I'll consecrate my days,
Promote thine interest, raise thy lasting praise,
If one so humble can extend thy fame,
Or aught advance thy dearly lovèd name.
No sacred bay that grows on Classic tree,
Which brings not grace, or good, or pride, to thee,
Shall I e'er think it worth my while to gain,
Though within reach and easy to obtain;
Nor is there any which might haply tend
Thy peace, or joy, or glory to extend,

I would not strive to grasp with all my might,
Although it grew on labour's rocky height,
That, when secured, my proud reward might be,
To weave with it a verdant-wreath for thee.
No happier prospect is before mine eyes,
No higher castle build I in the skies
Than in my birth-place all my days to spend,
The peasant's pastor and the poor man's friend.
Dearer to me the daisy of thy lea,
Thy woobdine wild, the haunt of many a bee,
Thy cowslip yellow and thy scarlet rose,
That on its leaf of green seems to repose,
Than loveliest flow'rets brought from foreign shores,
Which the delighted botanist explores;
Dearer to me thy circumscribèd lawn,
Sparkling with dew on summer morning's dawn,
Than boundless parks that stretch their wide domain
O'er hill and dale and eminence and plain,
Where sportive deer and nimble stags do play
From morn till eve, and weary out the day;
Dearer to me thine honoured rectory!
With windows dight with gothic tracery,
With pointed portico and crested towers,
Around whose bases blossom summer flowers,
Than all the lodges and the halls of state,

Where dwell the mighty and repose the great;
Dearer to me thine ancient steeple grey,
Raised by some pious hand some by-gone day,
With massy buttresses and niches fair,
And towering pinnacles that pierce the air;
Than e'en proud Salisbury's spire, amazing sight,
Which rises upwards just four times the height;
Dearer to me thy churchyard, planted o'er
With dingy cypress and green sycamore,
With sable yew and weeping willows brave,
That droop their branches o'er some new-made grave;
Thy broken tombstones whose inscriptions traced
Time's ruthless hand hath nearly now effaced;
Than the proud sepulchres of potent kings,
Over whose ashes fame her dirges sings,
That rest in state within the groinèd aisle
Of ancient Westminster's distinguished pile;
And dearer, too, each honest rustic's face,
Who smiles on passing with a country grace,
Than aught 'twere possible for me to tell,
If tuned my lyre, though harped my fingers well.
Return we now to Mendip's range once more,
New scenes to contemplate and sights t'explore,
And passing Uphill's bleak and barren height
Brean Down's bold outline will appear in sight,
Whose mighty rocks are lashed by Severn's waves,

Whose inmost caverns the proud breaker laves,
Dashing the silvery spray from side to side
As in full grandeur swells the advancing tide.
How often on yon summit have I stood,
And the fair landscape stretched around me viewed ;
Sometimes beheld the main convulsed with storm,
With billows rising in terrific form ;
And sometimes eyed the undisturbed expanse
In which the rocks reflected seemed to dance.
Oft in yon mossy caverns I have stayed,
From hour to hour my homeward course delayed,
Till lengthening shadows and fast closing eve
Chid my delay and bade me take my leave.
Surely Mount Carmel, where the Seer of God
Held for a time his solitary abode,
Somewhat resembles this fair hill in form,
In situation drear ; exposed to storm
Both mounts appear :—each is a promontory,
Stretching its barrier towards a western sea,
And from Brean Down, as from famed Carmel's height,
There shone from far a solitary light.
In by-gone centuries, when Gildas here
Led his ascetic life with heart sincere,
Whose bright example, like a beacon ray,
Chased brooding darkness and black mists away.

How often, like the prophet, Gildas toiled,
With vest ungirdled and by clambering soiled,
Up the steep path of yonder rough ascent,
With eye upon the summit fixed intent;
And when at length the topmost turf he trod,
Away from nature up to nature's God,
How would he turn his heaven glistening eye,
Lifted in transport upwards to the sky;
And then descending from the height once more,
How would he pace along the sea-girt shore,
Enter the humble sanctuary of God,
And sound His power, His truth, His grace abroad
To honest rustics who attentive stand;
Come at his bidding, go at his command.
In later years a second Gildas came,
And dear shall ever be his honoured name,
While memory sighs o'er many a by-gone scene,
With him connected and the shores of Brean;
The time would fail me did I stop to tell
Of Burnham's lighthouse or its wondrous well.
At Quantock's beauteous range I next must glance,
Which borders on the Channel's wide expanse,
Whose silver surface is bestudded o'er
With Islets twain 'twixt this and t'other shore.
Quantock! thy summits have before been sung
In softer notes and with a sweeter tongue
Than I possess: e'en from this very place

Yeatman thy beauties often loved to trace;
Thy wood-clad slopes now gilded by the beam
Of evening sun a lovely contrast seem,
To Mendip's sterile heights which mostly rise
In naked grandeur to the arched skies,
As if in sooth great nature's partial hand,
When weaving tapestry to deck our land
Had spent on Quantock all her worsteds fair,
And left the canvas stretched o'er Mendip bare,
Except within the far secluded glade,
Where e'en for Mendip ornaments she made;
Rising beneath old Quantock's eastern ridge,
Where river's banks are joined by iron bridge,
Wrapt in the dingy smoke of many a fire,
Behold Bridgwater's needle-pointed spire.
Here busy commerce leads her laden train
Of vessels proud that plough the mighty main,
And bustles fast through every crowded street,
Like fabled Mercury with "winged feet."
But leaving now a scene of constant change,
Observe we "Polden's" gently rising range,
So called perhaps because in time of war,
From Polden's summit might be seen afar,
The royal standard floating in the breeze,
High waving o'er the tops of neighbouring trees.
But farther south a fairer hill is seen,
Wrapt in a verdant vest of evergreen;

Few bards have ever dared to sing its praise
Since none could reach it with inferior lays;
For the same reason I too must be mute,
And only give its name "sweet Montacute!"
Mention we now but one fair summit more,
And that the far-famed Glastonbury Torre,
Where the last abbot suffered shameful death,
And into murderous hands resigned his breath.
'Twas here that many centuries before,
As those report who boast of ancient lore,
An holy visitor unlooked for came,
Of birth illustrious and of noble name,
And planted firm on Glaston's height forlorn,
The never dying—because sacred—thorn.
No Christmas yet hath whitened Glaston's brow,
With its accompanying fall of snow,
That hath not witnessed this fair thorn in bloom,
Which blossomed first near Joseph's new-made tomb.
This precious relic I myself have seen,
And plucked from off its boughs a sprig of green,
For sake of him whose honoured name I bear,
That I with Glaston might the present share.
But closing evening bids me hush my lay,
With which I've wearied out a summer's day;
The sun descending sheds his latest beam,
Causing yon glittering vane afar to gleam,

And form apparently a crest of fire
Around the apex of yon lofty spire;
And now the orb has sunk his glowing head,
And in yon ocean made his tranquil bed;
And now the blue wave and the snowy spray
Steal all his glory, take his crown away;
Nor aught appears, save the last ray that steals
From lost Apollo's radiant chariot wheels.
Brent Knoll! accept a minstrel's parting tear,
Thy flowery summit shall be ever dear
To him, who with frail hand and faltering tongue
Thy loveliness has harped and feebly sung,
Who now descending through the mossy dell,
Sighs forth to thee, blest mount, a sad farewell!

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